

CDC Vital Signs

African American Health

The life expectancy of African Americans *has* improved, but it's still an average of four years less than whites. Health differences are often due to economic and social conditions that affect African Americans more than whites throughout their lives. *All* Americans should have opportunities to pursue a healthy lifestyle. So what can be done?

Community organizations can train community health workers in underserved areas to educate and link people to free or low-cost healthcare services; conduct effective health promotion programs; and help people connect with healthcare providers, take medications as prescribed, and get to follow-up appointments.

Healthcare providers can learn about social and economic conditions that may put some patients at higher risk than others for health problems; work with healthcare professional organizations to eliminate cultural barriers to care; and promote a trusting relationship by encouraging patients to ask questions.

To learn more, visit [cdc.gov/vitalsigns](https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns).